

For Immediate Release

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ONTARIO GOVERNMENT REDUCING HEALTH CARE WAIT TIMES

New Wait Time Data Shows Double-Digit Drops in the North Simcoe Muskoka Area

TORONTO – New data shows the Ontario government's Wait Time Strategy is resulting in decreases in wait times for key health services in the North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) area, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Trends in the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN area are encouraging with significant decreases in wait times for a number of key health services," Smitherman said. "Through the leadership and hard work of thousands of front line health professionals, the Wait Time Strategy is clearly achieving real results for patients by improving access to care, closer to home."

As a result of the government's Wait Time Strategy, wait times in which nine out of 10 patients have completed their surgery or have had their exam in the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN area have decreased significantly since August/September 2005 by:

- 68.7 per cent for CT scans (79 days)
- 68.3 per cent for MRI scans (222 days)
- 63.3 per cent for cancer surgery (69 days)
- 61.7 per cent for knee replacement (227 days)
- 55.4 per cent for cataract surgery (93 days)
- 47.5 per cent for hip replacement (144 days).

Since the launch of the Wait Time Strategy, the Ontario government has invested \$13,505,514 for additional procedures in hospitals in the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN area, including:

- 1,134 cataract surgeries (\$850,500)
- 1,007 hip and knee joint replacements (\$7,506,828)
- 238 cancer surgeries (\$1,045,246)
- 9,916 hours, 14,874 exams MRI (\$3,313,540)
- 3,157 hours, 11,050 exams CT (\$789,400).

The new wait time data is available at www.ontariowaittimes.com, which is closing in on nearly 4 million hits as of today.

"These excellent results are a tribute to the collaborative efforts of our local health service providers, to make quality health care available when and where it's needed," said Jean Trimmell, CEO of the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care,

building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait time and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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